

He who is not proud of his ancestors shows, either that he had no ancestors to be proud of, or else that he is a degenerate son.-GROVESNOR.

GENEALOGY

OF THE  
BLISS FAMILY

IN  
AMERICA,

FROM ABOUT THE YEAR 1550 TO 1880.

Compiled by JOHN HOMER BLISS, Norwich, Conn.

INCLUDING THE COMPILATIONS OF JUDGE OLIVER BLISS MORRIS, OF SPRINGFIELD,  
MASS., AND SYLVESTER BLISS, ESQ., OF BOSTON, MASS.

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
Now green in youth now withering on the ground;  
Another race the following spring supplies;  
They fall successive, and successive rise;  
So generations in their course decay,-  
So flourish these, when those have passed away.  
-Peop's Homer, Book vi.

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## *Genealogy of the Bliss Family in America from About the Year 1550 to 1880 (1904)*

This genealogy of the Bliss family, compiled by John Homer Bliss of Norwich, Connecticut, was originally published in 1881, and this edition soon became unavailable, due to the destruction of the original plates used to print the book. In 1904 Henry Putnam Bliss used portions of the original volume to create the edition used in our database, which includes newer information that was compiled in the years between the publication of the first and second editions.

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### THIRD GENERATION.

JONATHAN, son of Thomas Bliss of England, was born about the year 1575 or 1580. He died 1635-6. It is not known who he married or when, but he had several children born to him, four of whom are said to have died young; the remaining children were—  
7. \*THOMAS, b.-, d. 1649.

8. MARY.

THOMAS, of England, of Braintree, Mass., and afterwards of Hartford, Conn., was a son of the first Thomas Bliss, of England, and was born about the year 1580 or 1585. He married in England about 1612-15, to Margaret, † and had ten children, of whom six were born previous to their removal to this country; these were named respectively, Ann, Mary, Thomas, Nathaniel, Lawrence, and Samuel; and in this country were probably born Sarah, Elizabeth, Hannah and John. Owing to religious persecutions, Thomas Bliss was compelled to leave England, and in the autumn of 1635, he with his younger brother George embarked at Plymouth with their families for the then wilderness of America. Upon their arrival at Boston, as before stated, Thomas located temporarily at Braintree, Mass., whence he afterwards removed to Hartford, Conn., where he died in

† It is thought her maiden name was Margaret Lawrence, and that she was born about the year 1594, and married to Thomas Bliss about 1612-15. She was a good looking woman, with a square oblong face that betokened great capability and force of character. She had a broad open brow, fair hair, and blue eyes. After the death of her husband, which took place about the close of the year 1639, she managed the affairs of the family with great prudence and judgment. Her eldest daughter, Ann, was married to Robert Chapman, of Saybrook, Conn., April 29, 1642, choosing April for their marriage month instead of May, for the old English adage ran—"To wed in May, you'll rue the day." She removed with her husband to Saybrook, where her eldest brother, Thomas, came soon after to live with them, and where he married in 1644, and in 1659 removed to Norwich, Conn., with thirty-four or thirty-five—others and effected the settlement of that town. The other children of the widow Margaret Bliss, of Hartford, concluded not to settle there permanently, chills and fever prevailing in some localities near the town; she and her children, therefore, in the year 1643, removed to the settlement of Springfield, Mass., thirty miles or more up the Connecticut River. Margaret sold her property in Hartford, and gathering her household goods and cattle together, prepared with her eight children to make the journey through the forest to Springfield, which she accomplished in about five



1640. We have been unable to ascertain the dates of birth of all the children in this family, but it is evident that Thomas was the oldest son, and that he must have been of age at the time of the distribution of the lots in Hartford, which would place his birth at about the year-1615-16. The births of the other children must have occurred between that of Thomas, jr. (unless Ann and Mary were older), and the death of Thomas, sen., in 1640, which would allow two years at least between them. Probably there were no other sons of age at the time of their arrival in Hartford, as otherwise they would have had lots assigned them-and there is nothing more discoverable respecting any of the children in Hartford.

days. Nathaniel and Samuel, her second and fourth sons, had been there previously, and a dwelling had been prepared for the family on their arrival. A journey like this was thought a great thing in those days. They camped out in the forest three nights with their teams, so sparsely was the country settled at that time; and the forests, infested with savage beasts and scarcely less savage Indians, were broken only by the single roads to the seaboard, on the east and on the south, and these were by no means of the best. Mrs. Margaret had acquaintances in Springfield whom she had known in England, and here she settled down for the remainder of her days. It is said she purchased a tract of land in Springfield one mile square, situated in the south part of the town, on what is now Main Street, and bordering on Connecticut River. One of the streets laid out on the manor tract has been named "Margaret Street," and another "Bliss Street," on which has been built a Congregational Church. She lived to see all her children brought up, married and established in homes of their own, except Hannah, who died at about twenty-three years of age. Mrs. Margaret died in Springfield, August 28, 1684, after a residence in America of nearly fifty years, and over forty since her husband's death. She was an energetic, efficient woman, capable of transacting most kinds of business, and was long remembered in Springfield as a woman of great intellectual ability. A mother with these characteristics seldom fails to transmit them to posterity. Her will, dated in September (1683 ?) mentions her son John, son Lawrence, deceased, son Samuel, daughter Elizabeth (Morgan), deceased, daughter Mary Parsons (widow of Joseph), and daughter Sarah (Scott). As no reference is made to Thomas or Ann, it has been questioned whether they were her children. But neither is there any reference in it to the children of her son Nathaniel, deceased, to whom in their younger years she had been guardian and guide; so that it cannot be inferred from such omission that Thomas, jr., and Ann were not her children. As she survived her husband forty-four years, it may have been that she was a second wife, and that these were children of a former marriage. He must have died comparatively young, or there may have been a great disparity in their ages. She lived more than ninety years, in spite of the hardships and anxieties she had passed through, and her grandchildren were generally very strong of constitution and long-lived, as were also her children. She was a woman of superior abilities, great resolution, and uncommon enterprise, and is entitled to the respect of her descendants, both for her vigor of mind and constitution.

The following are the names of the children of Thomas and Margaret Bliss, with their chronology as far as we have been able to ascertain:

9. ANN, b. in England, -, m. April 29, 1642, Robert Chapman, of Saybrook, Conn., and d. November 20, 1685. He was born about 1616, and came from Hull, England, to Boston, in August, 1635, and in November to Saybrook, Conn. He d. October 13, 1687. Issue: -I. John, b. July, 1644.

2. Robert, b. September, 1646. 3. Ann, b. September 12, 1648, d. next year. 4. Hannah, b. October 4, 1650. 5. Nathaniel, b. February 16, 1653. 6. Mary, b. April 15, 1655. 7. Sarah, b. September 25, 1657.

10. MARY, b. in England, -, m. November 26, 1646, Joseph Parsons, Springfield, Mass., who d. October 9, 1683. She d. January 29, 1712. Mr.

Parsons, associated with Mr. Pynchon, was one of the most prominent men in the public business of the place, and quite wealthy. He was a witness to the deed given by the Indians to Pynchon,† July 15, 1636. Joseph and Mary Parsons had five children before their removal to Northampton.

Mass., in 1654. (Their son Ebenezer, born in this place, May 1, 1655, was the first white child born in the town, and he was killed by the Indians at Northfield, September 2, 1675.) Here in Northampton they had seven more children, making twelve in all, but three, named Benjamin, John and David, died young. Mary Bliss, the mother of this family, two years after the birth of her youngest child, was charged with witchcraft by some of her neighbors who were envious of their prosperity and endeavored in this way to disgrace them. She was sent to Boston for trial where the jury gave her a full acquittal of the crime, and she returned home to Northampton, from whence they removed back to Springfield in 1679. Just after her acquittal in Boston, her son Ebenezer was killed by the Indians, and those who had been instrumental in bringing her to trial said: "Behold, though human judges may be bought off, God's vengeance neither turns aside nor slumbers." It is said that she possessed great beauty and talents, but was not very amiable.

11. \*THOMAS, b. in England, -, d. April 15, 1688.

[A Mr. Thomas Blythe (aged twenty years) came over in the barque "Globe" from London, August 7, 1635. If this was Thomas Bliss, afterwards of Norwich, -Conn., it gives his birth date as 1615.]

12. \*NATHANIEL, b. in England, -, d. November 8, 1654.

13. \*LAWRENCE, b. in England, -, d. in 1676.

14. \*SAMUEL, b. in England in 1624, d. March 23, 1720.

15. SARAH, b. at Boston Mount, about 1635-6, m. at Springfield, Mass., July 20, 1659, John Scott, by whom she had nine children, only one of whom (William) had issue. Mr. Scott died January 2, 1690, and the same year she was married again, to Samuel Terry. She d. September 27, 1705.

†The new settlement of Springfield, Mass., was laid out and conducted by William Pynchon, a man of great energy and enterprise and uncommon independence in religious opinions, which had brought him into great trouble in Boston, and he eventually left Springfield and returned home to England (1652) on account of the greater liberty of conscience enjoyed there than in the colonies. He was rich and liberal, and the settlers owed him better treatment than he received from them.



16. ELIZABETH, b. at Boston Mount, about 1637, was m. February 15, 1669-70, as the second wife of Sergeant Miles Morgan (b. 1615 and d. May 28, 1699), who had eight children by a previous marriage. Elizabeth had only one child, named Nathaniel, b. June 14, 1671. She was thirty-two or three years of age at the time of her marriage, and had been engaged in marriage before, but her intended husband was killed by the Indians.

17. HANNAH, b. at Hartford, 1639, d. single, January 25, 1662.

18. \*JOHN, b. at Hartford, 1640, d. September 10, 1702.

GEORGE, of England, of Lynn, Mass., 1637, of Sandwich, Mass., 1638, and of Newport, R. I., was born in 1591. He emigrated to this country with his brother Thomas, in 1635, resided a short time at Lynn, thence removed to Sandwich, Mass, on the Cape, where April 16, 1640, a lot of one and a half acres of land was granted him; but he does not appear to have continued long in the Plymouth Colony, for he was in Newport in 1649. In 1650 he was appointed, with others, to mend and make all the arms in Newport. Governor Arnold mentions him as one of whom he had bought land, and as one of the original purchasers of the island of Quononicut. In 1655-6 he appears on the Colonial Records as a freeman; and he bought land in Newport as late as March 22, 1660. On that date articles of agreement were made whereby Soso, an Indian captain of Narragansett, deeded (June 29, 1660,) a large tract of land called Misquamicutt† to seventy-six of the colonists, George Bliss being one of the number. i[In 1669 the territory of Misquamicutt was incorporated under the name of Westerly.] Mr. Bliss died August 31, 1667. It is known from records of Governor Arnold‡ that there was a son.

-19. \*JOHN, b. about 1645.

†Misquamicutt was the Indian name of salmon.

‡Benedict Arnold, Governor of Rhode Island, succeeded Roger Williams in that office in 1657, and continued till 1660; was also governor 1662 to 1666; from 1669 to 1672, and from 1677 to 1678, in which last year he died. He had lived in Providence as early as 1639. In 1657 he and Coddington (and others) purchased of the Indian Sachems the island of Quononicut. MASS. HIST. COLL., v. 217.

Governor Arnold was the first governor of Rhode Island under the Charter of King Charles II, granted July 8, 1663. This charter was in force until the adoption by the State of the present Constitution, in November, 1842. It is said that Governor Arnold was a son of William Arnold, one of the thirteen original proprietors of Providence; and it is thought he erected the old stone mill in Newport, as a clause in his will refers to "my stone built wind grist mill." He owned the land where that ancient structure stands.-HIST. R. 1.

He was the eldest son of William Arnold, was born in England, December 21, 1615, removed from Providence to Newport in 1653, and "made" the royal charter in 1663. He married Damaris, daughter of Stukeley Wescott, and had issue:- Gedsgift, Josiah, Benedict, jr., born about 1641, Freelove, Oliver, Caleb, Damaris, Priscilla and Penelope.-SAVAGES GEN. DICT.

#### FOURTH GENERATION.

THOMAS, of Rehoboth, Mass., son of Jonathan Bliss, of England, upon the death of his father in 1636, emigrated to America, landing at Boston, whence he removed to Braintree, Mass., thence to Hartford, Conn., and from there back to Weymouth, near Braintree, Mass., from which place he removed in 1643 with many others and commenced a new settlement which they called Rehoboth.<sup>t</sup> He was made a freeman in Cambridge, Mass., May 18th, 1642, and in the Plymouth Colony January 4th, 1645. June 9th of the same year he drew a lot (No. 30) on the Great Plain, in Seekonk. In 1646 he was appointed "to view the fence of the town lots," and in 1647 surveyor of highways. He died at Rehoboth in June, 1649, and was undoubtedly-buried in the old cemetery at Seekonk, Mass., (now Rumford, East Providence, R. I.,) where the first pastor of the new colony was afterwards interred. But it is a matter of great regret that the authorities, having the lands in charge have allowed the growth of unsightly weeds, bushes and brambles, to such an extent as to render the-identification of the earlier graves well nigh impossible, even where

The original purchase of land of Massasoit, in 1641, comprising the town of Rehoboth, was "a tract eight miles square," and embraced what now constitutes the-towns of Rehoboth, Seekonk, and Pawtucket; the second purchase now forms a part of Swansey and Barrington; and the third and last was called the "North Purchase,"-now Attleboro, Mass., and Cumberland, R. I.

The celebrated Roger Williams, who believed it "the prerogative of man to think as he pleased and to speak as he thought," arrived at Rehoboth (then Seekonk) in the Spring of 1636, but soon crossed the stream and took up his abode in what is now the beautiful city of Providence, R. I.

The first white settler within the original limits of Rehoboth was "one Master William Blackstone," a minister who settled there about 1637, and who is described as a sort of "Ishmaelite in religion," who left England through a dislike to the: "Lord Bishops," and was early displeased with the "Lord Brethren." He d May 26, 1675.

A number of emigrants from Hingham and Weymouth, Mass., soon-settled at Seekonk, among whom were the Rev. Samuel Newman and a majority of his church at W., Mr. Thomas Bliss being one of the number,-and in 1645 the proprietors. were incorporated town wise under the Scriptural name of Rehoboth.



the ravages of time have spared an occasional inscription. [And the same may be said of the old cemetery south of Rehoboth village.] Another unfortunate circumstance during the early part of the nineteenth century, the destruction by fire of the records of the first church, has deprived their posterity of much valuable information concerning the first settlers in Rehoboth. In the "N. E. Genealogical Register," vol. 4, p. 282, it is stated that Thomas Bliss' will was dated the 8th of June, 1649, and also that it was put into court on the 8th,-one of which statements has been considered erroneous; but perhaps the will was deposited, for safe keeping, in the hands of the person who officiated as surrogate. The instrument mentions his son Jonathan, to whom he devised his house; his eldest daughter, whose first name is not given, but is referred to as the wife of Thomas Williams; Mary, wife of Nathaniel Harmon, of Braintree; son-in-law, Nicholas Ide,† who was probably a son of his wife, Mrs. Ide, or Hyde, (by a previous husband), who had perhaps married a daughter; and his son, Nathaniel. (His property was inventoried at £117, 16s, 4d.) We gather, then, that he had issue:

20. \*JONATHAN, b. ab. 1625, d. ab. 1687.

21. A daughter who m. Thomas Williams.

22. MARY, who m. Nathaniel Harmon, Braintree, Mass.

23. NATHANIEL, of Rehoboth or Hingham, Mass., was probably married and had a family; for there was a "Margaret, daughter of Nathaniel Bliss, b. at Hingham on the 12th of the 9th month, (November ?) 1649," which was the same year in which the first child of his brother Jonathan was born,- and there was no other Nathaniel in that neighborhood at that early date. It is possible, therefore, that Nathaniel settled in Hingham. And as no descendants have been found or identified bearing the family name, it is presumed he had no sons who lived to maturity. [The Town Clerk of Hingham writes that there is no record there of any Bliss family.]

THOMAS, of Hartford, Saybrook, and Norwich, Conn., (son of Thomas and Margaret Bliss, of Hartford, Conn.,) was born in England, and removed to America with his father in 1635. Soon after his father's death he removed to Saybrook. Here his allotment of land was east of Connecticut River, in what is now Lyme, and his home lot lay between John Ompsted (Olmstead) on the north, and John Lay on the south. He sold his land here July 23, 1662, to

†It is not positively known who this Nicholas Ide m., but he had a son, Lieut. -Nicholas Ide, b. November (1654?) who m. December 27, (1678?) Mary Ormsby. Issue: Nathaniel, (d. March 14, 1702-3,) Jacob, Martha, Patience, John, and Benjamin,-all b. in Rehoboth, 1678-1693. By a second wife, Eliza, he had a son, Nicholas, jr., b. in Attleborough, July 25, 1697. Lieut. Nicholas d. June 5, 1723.



John Comstock and Richard Smith, having removed his family to Norwich,t Conn., two or three years previous. He was married October 30th, 1644, to a wife named Elizabeth, and they had six children born to them in Saybrook, and their seventh child, named Anne, born in 1660, was the second English child born in Norwich. His allotment in Norwich was "next to Sergeant Leffingwell, (opposite, according to the ancient map,) on the street as it runs south, five acres and a fourth, with a lane on the south leading to a watering place at the river." This homestead is still occupied by his descendants, (1880,) seven generations of the same name having successively inherited the homestead and dwelt therein,-the property being held under the original deed,-and the house itself, in its frame work, is doubtless the original habitation built by the first grantee. In a country where the tenure is allodial, and there are no rights of primogeniture or entailment, instances of two hundred years of family ownership are not very common.

In (1680?) Thomas Bliss and Matthew Griswold were appointed agents by the town of Saybrook to " lay out a lot of land to an Indian named The Giant," near Black Point, in what is now East Lyme, Conn. The locality is still called " The Giant's Neck."

The energy, sound health, and good judgment of Thomas Bliss, brought great prosperity, which is evidenced by his having made a will; for only those who had considerable property to dispose of did so, as it was a very expensive affair in those days, for the tyranny and rapacity of Sir Edmund Andros compelled the colonists to carry every such instrument to Boston to prove, and have recorded, in order that he (Sir Edmund) might avail himself of the fees of that office towards supporting the state in which he aspired to live; for he never appeared in the streets without guards, or two or three servants following him,-and it was quite as easy to obtain access to the King of England as to his ape, the governor of these colonies.

tThe town of Norwich was purchased from the Indian sachems of the Mohegan tribe in June, 1659, and settled that year by thirty-five men, most of whom were from Saybrook, Conn., Thomas Bliss being one of the number. The following year, 1660. the Rev. James Fitch, pastor of the church at Saybrook, and the greater part of his church removed to Norwich, where Mr. F. officiated as pastor until about the year 1696, when by reason of age and infirmity he resigned the pastorate, and in 1702 removed to the new town of Lebanon, Conn., where he soon died. The original tract of Norwich was "9 miles square," the consideration given the Indians.. being £70.

Thomas Bliss' will is dated April 13th, 1688, two days before his death; and in it provision was made for his wife Elizabeth and six daughters, and his only living son, Samuel, who was at that time-thirty-one years of age. His estate was estimated at ,182, 17s, 7d. He had land, besides his home lot, " over the river-on the Little Plain-at the Great Plain-at the Falls-in the Yantic meadow-in meadow at Beaver Brook-in pasture east of the town-and on Westward hill." Issue:

24. ELIZABETH, b. at Saybrook, Conn., November 20, 1645, m. June 7, 1663, Edward Smith, of New London, Conn. This couple, with their son John, æt. 15, died of an epidemic disease in 1689-the son July 8th, the wife July 10th, and Mr. S. July 14th. A son, (Capt. Obadiah, b. 1677) and six daughters went to reside at Norwich with relatives.
25. SARAH, b. at Saybrook, August 26, 1647, m. December, 1668, Thomas Sluman, Norwich, and had six children. He died in 1683, and she afterwards m. April 8, 1686, Dr. Solomon Tracy, of Norwich, by whom she had one son. She d. August 29, 1730. Dr. T. died July 9, 1732.
26. MARY, b. at Saybrook, Conn., February 7, 1649, m. about 1672-3, David, son. of Dea. Hugh and Ann Caulkins, of New London, Conn., (a Welchman. who came to this country about 1640, stopped at Marshfield for a short season, then removed to Lynn, Mass., thence to New London about 1652, and finally to Norwich, Conn., about 1659.) He had the estate of his father in that part of New London now known as Waterford, near Niantic.. From this union has descended the modest and diligent historian of Norwich and New London,-Miss Frances M. Caulkins, who was widely known as one of the leading antiquarian writers of her day. David Caulkins d. November 25, 1717.
27. THOMAS, b. at Saybrook, Conn., March 3, 1652, d. January 29, 1682, probably unmarried.
28. DELIVERANCE, b. at Saybrook, August 10, 1655, m. June 8, 1682, Daniel Perkins, of Norwich, Conn.
29. \*SAMUEL, b. at Saybrook, December 9, 1657, d. December 30, 1731.
30. ANNE, b. at Norwich, September 15, 1660, m. April 8, 1688, Josiah Rockwell, of N., and d. February 19, 1714-15. He d. March 18, 1728. Josiah Rockwell was a son of Josiah Rockwell and Rebecca Loomis of Windsor ? Conn. A son Daniel, b. October 24. 1689, m. November 23, 1715, Tabitha Hartshorn, and d. in 1746, leaving several children, among whom was Daniel, jr., b. June 28, 1724, who m. December 29, 1746, Mindwell Bliss,, daughter of Samuel Bliss and Sarah Packer, of Norwich, Conn.
31. REBECKAH, b. at Norwich, March 18, 1663, m. April 8, 1686, Israel Lathrop, of N., and d. August 22, 1737. He d. March 28, 1733.

NATHANIEL, of Springfield, Mass., (son of Thomas and Margaret Bliss, of Hartford, Conn.,) was born in England, came to America with his father in 1635, and removed to Springfield, Mass., with his mother in 1643, about seven years after that place was purchased from-



the Indians by Pynchon. Three years later, when they were well-settled, he married Catharine, daughter of Dea. Samuel Chapin, of S., November 20, 1646, a few days before his sister Mary was married to Joseph Parsons. Nathaniel and Catharine Bliss had four children: Samuel, who died aged one hundred and one and a half years; Margaret, who married **Nathaniel Foote**; Mary; and Nathaniel; the last lived to the age of eighty-three years, though the father died November 8, 1654, before this Nathaniel was two years old. [Widow Catherine Bliss, about eight months after her husband's death, married Thomas Gilbert, July 31, 1655; by him she had four more children, when he died June 5, 1662, and she soon married her third husband, Samuel Marshfield, December 28, 1664, and by him she had her usual number of four children, making twelve in all. Not much time lost in mourning or widowhood; but times were hard for a widow with little children, and men at this time outnumbered the women in the colonies, and there was no lack of suitors for single women.] She died February 4, 1712. Issue:

32. SAMUEL, b. November 7, 1647, d. June 19, 1749.

33. \*MARGARET, b. November 12, 1649, m. May 2, 1672, **Nathaniel Foote**, Colchester, Conn., where she d. April 3, 1745. He was b. at Wethersfield, Conn., January 14, 1648-9, was the son of Nathaniel, and grandson of Nathaniel "the settler." He resided at Hatfield, Mass., two years, Springfield four years, and at Stratford and Branford, Conn., and lastly at Wethersfield, where he d. of consumption, January 12, 1703. His family subsequently removed to Jeremy's Farm," since and now called Colchester, Conn.,-a tract of land on the road from Hartford to New London, owned by Jeremiah Adams, one of the first settlers of Hartford. Mr. Foote was a Quartermaster in the army during King Philip's war, and was in the fight at Turner's Falls (Conn. River) under the brave Capt. Turner, who, it is said, that night fought hand to hand with Philip himself. Next day Turner and most of his men were killed by the Indians, and Foote, though badly wounded, was one of the few who escaped.

34. MARY, b. September 23, 1651, m. February 27, 1670, Nathaniel Holcomb, farmer, and lived in Simsbury, Conn. He was a son of Thomas Holcomb, of Windsor, and was b. November 4, 1648.

35. NATHANIEL, b. March 27, 1653, d. December 23, 1736. He m. December 28, 1676, Deborah (dan. of Q. M. Geo.) Colton, who died November 26, 1733. No issue. He adopted Joshua Field as his principal heir.

LAWRENCE, of Springfield, Mass., (son of Thomas and Margaret Bliss, of Hartford, Conn.,) was born in England, removed to America -with his father in 1635, and married in Springfield, October 25, 1654, -to Lydia, daughter of Dea. Samuel and Margaret Wright, and died in 676. [She afterwards married October 31, 1678, John Norton, who